



Why choose a school that ends in grade 8?

With so many schools offering different programs at varying levels, we feel strongly that a school ending in eighth grade actually serves children most effectively. Here are some of the reasons supporting that claim:

Early leadership opportunities. Because Green Acres middle schoolers are the “kings (and queens) of the hill,” they serve the school as leaders. Eighth graders are responsible for designing and publishing the school yearbook. Seventh and eighth graders plan their own social events; participate in team building and community service activities; and produce, manage, and star in our annual musical and dance production. Eighth grade students help with open houses and admission tours, and even help to design their own graduation ceremony. Students in lower grades see middle school students as creative and helpful leaders of the school, and middle school students respond with maturity, confidence, and vision uncommon for their age. That’s the result of taking the lead early on.

Appropriate curriculum development. Because Green Acres ends at grade 8, our middle schoolers are never treated like young high school students. Teachers and administrators determine our curriculum in consideration of the unique needs and abilities of middle school children, rather than through a “top-down” system that can regard efficiency as a greater virtue than healthy development. This assures that our curriculum is specifically responsive to the developmental needs and idiosyncrasies of middle school. Not coincidentally, we think this actually makes them better high school students.

A longer childhood. We hear frequently these days that our children grow up too fast, and we agree enthusiastically. Older adolescents today must confront a litany of concerns, ranging from alcohol and drugs to sexuality or violence. While we discuss these and many other “hotbutton” topics in our advisory program, it is simply not appropriate to approach these issues in the same ways for students from 10 to 13 years old, whose thinking abilities are still developing and whose bodies are not ready for such weighty matters. With little high school influence at Green Acres, we believe our students are more ingenuous, more likely to engage in healthy, age-appropriate “play,” and more comfortable being kids a few years longer than many of their peers. That’s just the way we like it.

A choice of high schools. It is no secret that children often change radically in middle school. What seems awkward at 10 may be comfortable at 14; what looks appealing early may lose its luster in a few years. And no matter where a student attends middle school, high school will be a major transition. Students who look for a high school while they are young miss the joy of self-awareness and discovery that middle school provides. At Green Acres, we work with every student, beginning in seventh grade, to identify appropriate high schools and to guide families through the process of applying to independent schools or preparing for the transition to public high school. Because we’ve given them our best for years, and because our graduates enjoy excellent high school placement success, students emerge confident and capable, each more prepared to select his or her next environment, for ninth grade and beyond.